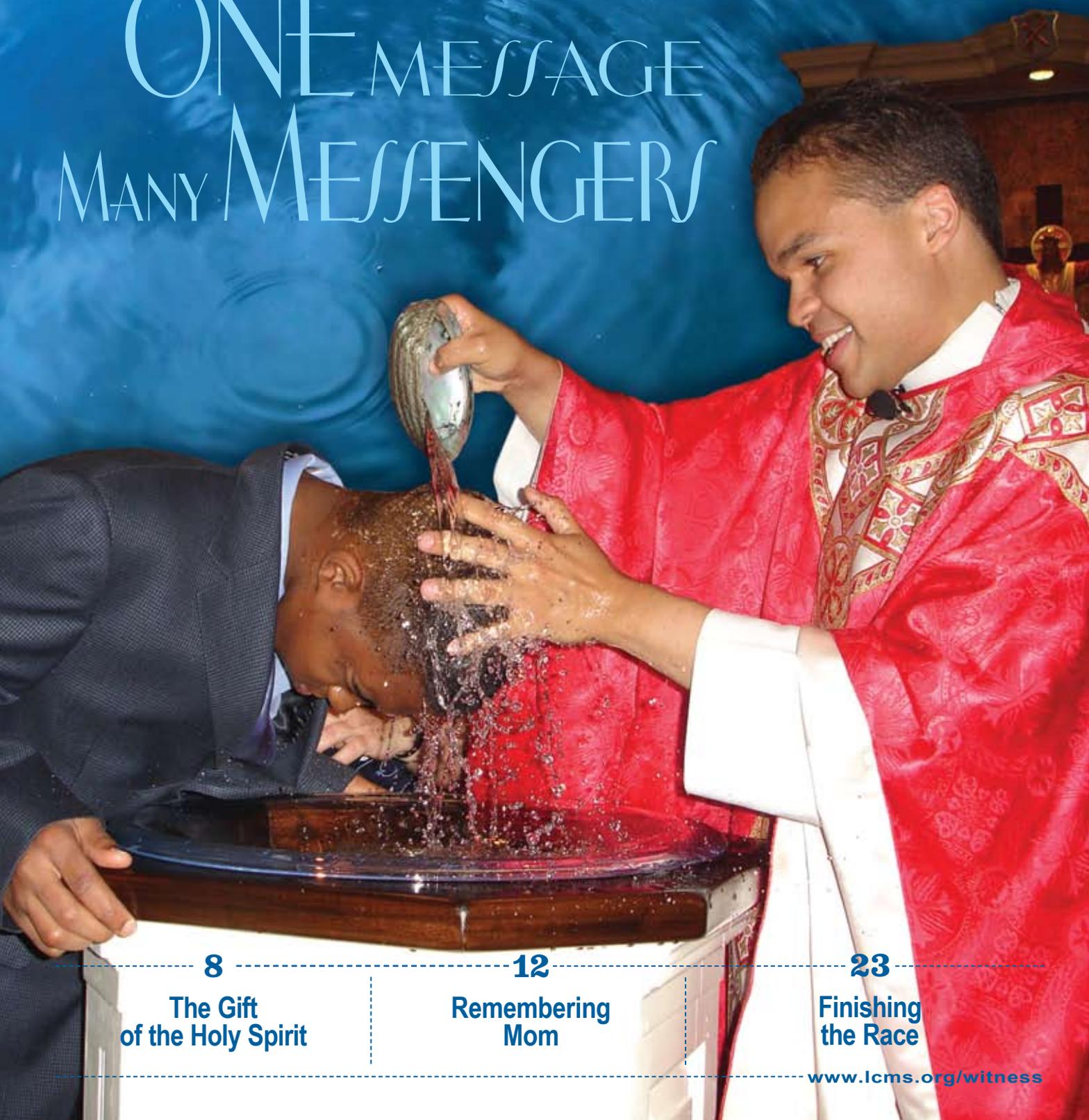




THE LUTHERAN WITNESS™

VOL. 127 NO. 5 MAY 2008

ONE MESSAGE MANY MESSENGERS



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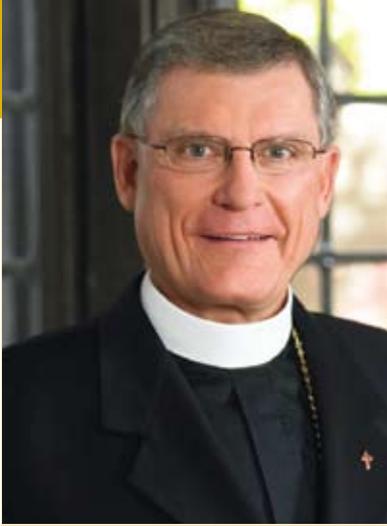
The Gift
of the Holy Spirit

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Remembering
Mom

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Finishing
the Race



Pastors Wanted

May is the month of graduations from schools at all levels, including our Lutheran elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries. In addition, in May we

celebrate Pentecost, Mother's Day, and Memorial Day. What a blessing to celebrate graduations, to thank God for the gift of mothers, to have a special day to recognize the birthday of the Christian church, and to honor those who have given so much for our freedom.

One of our greatest freedoms is the freedom of religion—to worship the Triune God and to proclaim the message of salvation through faith in Christ alone, all without fear of persecution or martyrdom.

The message of salvation in Christ, without any merit or worthiness in ourselves, is the wonderful Good News that we have to share with the world. This is the message of St. Paul in Romans 10, that “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (v. 9) and “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (v. 13).

Please listen to Paul's next words: “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” (vv. 14–15).

These words highlight the critical importance of those whom God calls into the ministry of the Gospel in the pastoral office.

In the Missouri Synod, nearly 5,400 active pastors—along with a significant number of retired pastors—serve 6,155 congregations. Concordia Plan Services tells me that about half the pastors active in ministry today will reach or pass retirement age in the next 10 years.

This would mean the Synod's congregations will need around 2,700 pastors over that time, an average of 270 each year, just to fill vacancies created by retirements. This is more than the number of pastors certified and ordained in each of the past 35 years. Add to that the objective of the Synod approved in 2004 to start 2,000 new congregations by 2017—an *Ablaze!* goal—and one can easily see the challenge before us to identify, recruit, and prepare pastors for our Synod.

Surveys indicate that entering seminary students by and large identify their parish pastor as the individual most influential in their decision to enter the seminary

to become a pastor. Also important is the influence of parents, grandparents, and key congregational lay leaders.

In my own case, I was preparing for a career as a veterinarian when the Lord through an experience in college turned my head in a different academic direction. As a result, upon graduation, I had the privilege of teaching fourth grade in a Lutheran school. The influence of the pastor in the congregation that operated the school was significant in my growing respect for the pastoral office. That, along with the influence of my campus pastor and encouragement from the beautiful young lady who has been my wife for the past 42 years, resulted in my Spirit-led decision to enter the seminary to become a pastor. Over the years, other pastors have shared with me many and varied stories of ways the Lord led them to make that same decision.

... the Synod's congregations will need around 2,700 pastors over that time, an average of 270 each year, just to fill the pastoral vacancies created by retirements.

All this is shared as encouragement to think of men to whom the Lord has given such gifts as faith, faithfulness, ability to communicate, love for Jesus, deep appreciation for Scripture, and sincere concern for the welfare of people—especially for those who do not yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord. Encourage these men to consider the pastoral ministry. And prayerfully consider financially supporting them and the other men at our seminaries. To contribute, send your check to Joint Seminary Fund, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122, or go on the Web to www.lcms.org?11585.

I know you join me in prayer and in personal participation in this very important endeavor so that many more may hear the Good News about Jesus!

Lives Transformed through Christ, in Time . . . for Eternity!

e-mail: president@lcms.org

Web page: www.lcms.org/president

Jerry Kieschnick

John 3:16–17



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by **Gerhard Bode**

Without cultural traditions behind it, we may wonder how to celebrate Pentecost. Is it really as important as the other days? Why do we observe Pentecost at all?

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by **Edie Sodowsky**

Mom had long ago lost touch with reality ... but a beloved hymn cut through the fog.

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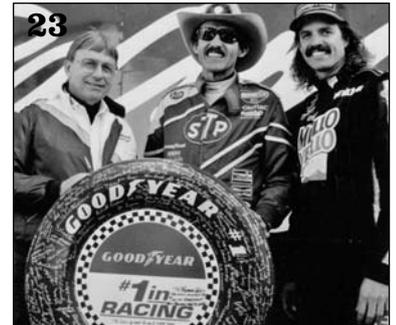
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by **Timothy C. Cartwright**

After a four-decade career that spanned the globe, Leo Mehl, one of the most influential people in modern motorsports, has found a spiritual home in a Lutheran congregation.

TO THE READER

The month of May covers a lot of ground by closing the door on spring and opening the door to summer. In this issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, we also cover a lot of ground. We begin, as the month does, with Pentecost and Mother's Day (both May 11 this year), and end with a nod to the Memorial Day weekend, traditionally, our "official" start to the summer season.

More important—as noted by "One Message—Many Messengers," our cover

story—we also focus on May as Pastoral Education Month. This Synod-wide emphasis provides an opportunity to reflect on the many blessings God has granted to us through the men who serve the LCMS as His faithful shepherds; the work of our seminaries in preparing these men for service; the encouragement and support we can provide as individuals, groups, and congregations; and the many opportunities He has granted us to share His Good News in a multiplicity of settings.

May our heavenly Father, through His Holy Spirit, grant us hearts willing to joyfully support our pastors and the important work they do for our church and the Kingdom. Indeed, as we know, the fields are white for harvest, and we pray earnestly that our Father would raise up workers for that harvest. May He bless our efforts.

James H. Heine, Managing Editor
The Lutheran Witness

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- Something Old, Something New

They Will Place Their Hands on Sick People

As a Veterans Administration hospital chaplain from age 50 to 65, I grew in great respect for all working there, from diagnosticians to surgeons, from nurses and social workers to those in sanitation and maintenance. They did their best. So did I, but not always with the knowledge I should have had. God blesses preachers most!

I generally arrived at my basement office at 7:30 a.m. to assign other chaplains new patient cards before they arrived at eight. On a memorable Monday morning, Caroline—a staff secretary from another division—confronted me before I could unlock my door.

“Mr. Smith is going into surgery right now!”

“No one is scheduled on the surgical chart this morning.”

She pointed her finger toward the elevator door and shouted, “Run!”

I knew Caroline’s reputation from her volunteer work as the organizer of the hospital’s daily lunchtime “Fasting Prayer Session.” I ran. Breathless, I took the elevator up to the fourth floor and ran to the surgical suite.

“Mr. Smith?” I gasped.

A nurse pointed to a gurney being wheeled toward swinging doors. “Whatever you do, do fast!”

“I don’t know what’s wrong with him,” I thought as I caught up with the gurney and put my right hand on Mr. Smith’s forehead.

“Lord, make this the shortest operation of its kind on record, and give him a complete healing. Amen.” Mr. Smith was wheeled through the doors.

Immediately, I had second thoughts. “Why did I say a dumb prayer like that? Even in an emergency like this, God deserved a more sensible request.” With a heavy sigh, I returned to my office and assigned the other chaplains patients based on the new admission cards on my desk. God gave me a good day but no report on Mr. Smith’s emergency surgery.



‘Lord, make this the shortest operation of its kind on record, and give him a complete healing. Amen.

When I arrived the next morning, the chief surgeon was standing by my office door, arms crossed in front of his chest. From a lecture by Tennessee Williams on the significance of body language I once attended, I knew that pose meant “stubborn obstinance.”

The surgeon’s first words were even more powerful than his stance. “What did you do to Mr. Smith before surgery yesterday?” he demanded.

I invited him into my office. I wanted to ensure privacy while he chewed me out.

As expected, he began loudly, “I’m a surgeon—a scientist who acts logically on all the data I receive. Mr. Smith came in as an outpatient on Wednesday, complaining of abdominal pain. The intern who examined him discovered a large abdominal mass. I ordered x-rays and determined that Mr. Smith had a suspicious tumor. I ordered a needle biopsy and the return data—aggressive, fast-moving cancer—demanded the earliest surgery possible, which was yesterday morning.”

He continued: “I had the intern’s report, the x-rays, and the needle biopsy. After you did whatever you did, I ordered an MRI to determine exactly where I would not cut. I’m a scientist. I act logically on all the evidence I have. When I opened him up, I found nothing. Absolutely nothing! What did you do?”

My reply was simply and honest. “I did nothing. God did everything. He answered the one-sentence prayer I gave out of my ignorance of the patient’s condition.”

“Well, I have to thank you for your prayer and thank God for His gracious answer,” the surgeon replied.

We shared a short prayer of thanks, shook hands, and the surgeon left. The next time I saw him was at one of Caroline’s “Fasting Prayer Sessions.” We both knew that prayers, no matter how simple or inarticulate, are heard by our heavenly Father.

Rev. John E. Schroeder, emeritus, is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church, St. Charles, Mo.



LETTERS

Playing Second Fiddle

Regarding February's Family Counselor, "Playing Second Fiddle": One might point out to the husband who feels like a second fiddle that life is a matter of the choices one makes. He may choose to feel like a second fiddle and put pressure on his wife, making her defensive, and at the same time inducing an air of animosity toward his mother-in-law. This creates a hostile environment in which his son is being raised. When his son is raised in this kind of atmo-

Love is so fulfilling. God is love. By God's good grace, may this be helpful.

John S. Winters
Yonkers, N.Y.

No Longer Captive

In his article "No Longer Captive: Alleluia!" in the March *Lutheran Witness*, Rev. John T. Pless speaks of the sting of death, that is, sin, but he fails to address the power of sin, that is, the Law.

Yet, the Holy Spirit teaches us through His servant, the apostle

How about a cover depicting Mary as she "comes to the garden alone . . . while the dew is still on the roses . . . and the joy we share as we tarry there."

Our Lord has given us much beauty and reasons to be joyful. Let's accentuate the positive.

Dorothy Staub
Tilden, Neb.

Sharing Our Faith

Thanks for the free copy of the January *Lutheran Witness*. Our former congregation's pastor chose to discontinue the blanket congregational subscription offered through the New Jersey District in a cost-saving move. The savings are minimal, but I suspect this attitude is prevalent among many pastors and congregations. I feel this to be very foolish. The magazine's tremendous improvement in style and approach, with articles that pertain to people in today's society, is a "good witness" to our faith. We can now use such items as a response to those who knock on our doors, advocating other perspectives of religion or Christianity.

Paul Sparling
via the Internet



One might point out to the husband who feels like a second fiddle that life is a matter of the choices one makes.

John S. Winters
Yonkers, N.Y.

sphere, he will develop the same hostility and may wind up a problem child.

There is a second option: the husband/father may choose to be thankful that he has two people raising his son and thank his mother-in-law for helping him and his wife raise their son, even though she is not obliged so to do.

Sanctioning and encouraging his mother-in-law establishes a different perspective in the home. The wife is at ease and the mother-in-law is appreciated. His son can now develop a congenial relationship with all family members. The husband may even extend himself to give the mother-in-law a few thankful hugs; then he won't be afraid to prevail on her to care for his son while he takes his wife on a brief vacation. Yes, indeed, it is the choices we make.

Paul, in Rom. 7:6: "But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the Law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code."

Alleluia!

Helen Leopold
Baltimore, Md.

Positive covers, please!

Being in the seventh decade of my life, I have long wondered why you so frequently choose such grotesque, repulsive covers for *The Lutheran Witness*.

The March special issue was no exception. It just made me shudder. No wonder we are losing so many of our youth. It is as if we are stuck in the dark ages.

I find it ironic that in the very first paragraph of the article "A Hand of Life-Giving Love" in the January *Lutheran Witness*, it speaks about the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18-20 "being caught, thought, and taught . . . incompletely and even inaccurately" [emphasis added] when the article itself incompletely presents that very Scripture. Finger 4 on the outstretched palm and paragraph 4 both speak of baptizing and teaching everything that Jesus has told us. Jesus' words recorded in Matt. 28:20 are "teaching them to obey [emphasis added] everything I have commanded you." Certainly Jesus could have left "to obey" out of the Great Commission if He thought it unnecessary. The article's point of these verses having

been given a “heavy Law orientation” is not served well by simply deleting or ignoring words inconvenient to the author’s point.

Let us keep and teach Jesus’ words in their entirety and resist the common temptation to dilute them.

*Beth Gehrke
Elgin, Ill.*

We welcome letters that comment on articles in *The Lutheran Witness*. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Send letters to “Letters,” c/o *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; or send them via e-mail to Lutheran.Witness@LCMS.org. Please include your name, postal address, and telephone number.



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About the cover: Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor, pastor of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, The Bronx, New York, baptizes Brandon Roberts on the Vigil of Pentecost 2006. Photo by Naresh Seoprasad.



The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The miracle of Pentecost is not merely a past historical event. The Spirit's wondrous activity goes on in the Church today.

What is a Christian to do with Pentecost?

Traditionally, the Church has observed this day as one of the most important festivals of the year. But unlike Christmas or Easter, Pentecost doesn't have the cultural attachments that remind us of its significance. There are no ornamented trees, strings of lights, or wrapped presents to announce the season, no egg-filled baskets or Easter lilies to proclaim the day. Without cultural traditions behind it, we may wonder how to celebrate Pentecost. Is it really as important as the other days? Why do we observe Pentecost at all?

The Church celebrates the Festival of Pentecost as the fulfillment and conclusion of the Easter season. The name *Pentecost*, meaning “the fiftieth day,” originally referred to the Jewish Festival of Weeks, the time of thanksgiving for first-fruits and the ingathering of the harvest (cf. Ex. 34:22). The Christian Church retained the name to mark the completion of the 50-day period after Easter—and the first ingathering of believers into the Church.

On Pentecost, Christians commemorate the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We recall how a humble fisherman, filled with the Spirit, boldly proclaimed Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. We give thanks that a multitude of hearers repented and believed. Three thousand people, from all over the world, were baptized and received the gift of the Spirit. Sent by God the Father, and by His Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit came to continue the Father’s work on earth.

The Spirit’s activity continues today. That’s why the Christian celebration of Pentecost is such a joyful one—and so vital for the Church to remember. Through the preaching of the Gospel and Baptism, the Holy Spirit calls and gathers believers to Christ and His Church. This gracious work is ongoing; it is not yet completed in our lives. The Spirit works among people of every nation and language—among all to whom the Church is sent to proclaim the Gospel. For this reason, Christians pray for the continued outpouring of the Spirit and for the fulfillment of His sanctifying work.

The Promised Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit’s activity is creative and powerful. His working in this way has a history. In the Old Testament, the Spirit was present at the creation of the world, hovering over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2). The Spirit came in power upon Israel’s judges and kings, equipping and strengthening them to accomplish great feats and victories for God and His people (Judges 6:34; 14:6; 1 Sam. 16:13, 14). By the Spirit, the prophets became mouthpieces for the Lord, proclaiming both judgment and deliverance (Ezek. 2:2–3; Micah 3:8). In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon Christ Himself, descending upon Him in the form of a dove at His Baptism (Matt. 3:16). On the evening before His crucifixion, Jesus promised His disciples that they would receive the *Paraclete*, the Spirit of Truth. This Comforter and Helper would live with them and be in them forever (John 14:16ff.). He would direct them in proclaiming Christ and His work of salvation for the world. After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples, sending them out to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20 NIV). Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus explained to the apostles that they, too, would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). When the Spirit came upon them, He said, they would receive power, and they would be His “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus’ promise of sending the Holy Spirit upon His followers was soon fulfilled in a marvelous and unprecedented way.

The Spirit's activity continues today. That's why the Christian celebration of Pentecost is such a joyful one—and so vital for the church to remember.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Day of Pentecost

The apostles had gathered themselves in Jerusalem to wait and pray. They were a bedraggled group—an odd assortment of unimpressive, unemployed out-of-towners. Suddenly, a sound like the rushing of a great wind filled the whole house where they were staying. Tongues of fire appeared on them. The Holy Spirit came upon them in power and strength, filling each of them, and they all began to speak in other languages.

What an amazing scene! With the wind, audible but unseen, came the Spirit's creative breath of life (cf. John 3:8). With the many tongues of fire was the one fire of the Spirit's presence—the presence that warms cold hearts and burns away the deadness of doubt and unbelief. The miraculous ability to speak in different tongues equipped the apostles for communicating with the visitors staying in Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival.

When we struggle with fear and doubt, the Holy Spirit invites us to pray for comfort and hope. The Spirit—our Helper—does not give us over to discouragement, but strengthens us in our faith. He reminds us that Christ, our Savior from sin and death, holds us firmly in His undying grip, and helps us hold firmly to Him.

The strange events drew a crowd. The Spirit sent the apostles out preaching and witnessing—proclaiming the wonders of God. The audience was bewildered by the message and the messengers. How could simple Galileans speak such things? Some in the crowd scorned and ridiculed the apostles. Were they deluded? Drunk? But others were amazed at what they heard, wondering what all this meant.

On Pentecost, the apostles were human instruments of the Holy Spirit. Ordinary people, filled with no ordinary Spirit, they became extraordinary witnesses—courageous proclaimers of the Gospel. Under the Spirit's guidance, Galilean fishermen, a former tax collector, and the others—flawed instruments all—now announced the great saving work of God in Jesus Christ. And impetuous Peter—the one who had denied Jesus, who had forsaken Him and hid in fear—stepped forward as the bold spokesman of the Holy Spirit.

What did the Spirit accomplish on Pentecost? Through the apostles' preaching and Baptism, He called and gathered believers into the Church of Christ. He gave them the Christ-earned forgiveness of sins and salvation. He established Christ's kingdom, made manifest through the Gospel for all the world. As Luther proclaimed in his 1534 Pentecost sermon: "Thus Christianity begins with the poor fisherman, and with the despised work of God, which is called Christ, hanging on the cross" (WA 37.402).

The Present Work of the Spirit

The miracle of Pentecost is not merely a past, historical event. The Spirit's wondrous activity goes on in the Church today. To be sure, the special manifestation and dynamic outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles at the first Pentecost was a unique event in the history of the Church. However, there are some important things for Christians to remember about our own Pentecost celebrations.

The confidence of Christians in our world today easily can be shaken. We are bombarded with invitations to doubt the truthfulness of God and His Word. False teachers may tempt us to cast aside our faith in favor of the claims of other "truths." We have become accustomed to new assaults on the person of Jesus Christ, His message,

and His work. It may not surprise us that our beliefs are rejected and despised, but our confidence may soon weaken if we find ourselves rejected and despised because of our faith.

In his recent bestselling book, *The GOD Delusion*, biologist Richard Dawkins attacks belief in God, asserting that religious faith—especially the Christian faith—is not only utter foolishness but a threat to a stable and healthy society. He maintains that atheism and a rejection of all religions could be a force for peace in the world. Keeping faith and hope becomes ever more difficult as Christianity and Christians become the object of ridicule, mockery, and even suspicion.

When we struggle with fear and doubt, the Holy Spirit invites us to pray for comfort and hope. The Spirit—our Helper—does not give us over to discouragement, but strengthens us in our faith. He reminds us that Christ, our Savior from sin and death, holds us firmly in His undying grip, and helps us hold firmly to Him. The Spirit does not give us over to uncertainty, but consoles us, confirming in us the belief that God's Word is true and His promises sure. The Spirit gives us joy in the midst of grief, peace in the face of fear.

The Holy Spirit active in the apostles on Pentecost is the same Spirit who works in believers today. The dynamic Word proclaimed on Pentecost—the Gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead—is the same Word proclaimed among us today. The Spirit unites believers through the bond of peace. As the apostle Paul

testifies, the Spirit calls us to one hope, the hope of the glorious salvation life of Christ. Together with the apostles and the early Christians we have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:5). The Spirit works surely and certainly in the Church, and in the hearts and lives of individual believers. Like the apostles on Pentecost, our courage and confidence in witnessing and telling others about Christ lie in the power of the Spirit and the Word.

The Holy Spirit has a history—a record—of working in the world through His means of grace and the forgiveness of sins. This history is also a personal one for each of us, because the Spirit works intimately in our lives. In his explanation to the Third Article of the Creed, Luther details the Spirit’s work, giving us a very personal confession of faith for Pentecost:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

Through the Gospel and the Sacraments, the Spirit nourishes, preserves, and increases the Church and its members. As believers in Jesus, we too have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and our Baptisms are wonderful reminders of the Spirit’s gracious activity of regeneration.

The Church belongs to the Holy Spirit, and His work in it goes on unceasingly until the Last Day. He continues to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to create faith, and to administer the forgiveness of sins to believers across the globe. At the same time, He gathers new people into His Church, using modern-day apostles as His instruments, sending them to all nations, baptizing and teaching.

Through the Holy Spirit, the Gospel is amazingly translatable, crossing languages, cultures, and ethnic borders. The Spirit speaks Arabic and Zulu, Spanish and Mandarin, American Sign Language and Braille, and He proclaims the divine Good News in all of these human languages. National divisions and prejudices are not barriers to the Spirit. He is no respecter of human boundaries. He is the Caller, Gatherer, and Unifier of God’s people in the Church.

Luther wrote a Pentecost hymn that may serve as a prayer to the Holy Spirit. In this beautiful hymn we pray for the Spirit to be active among us, to strengthen our faith, and to comfort us as we walk in His service:

*Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord,
With all Your graces now outpoured
On each believer's mind and heart;
Your fervent love to them impart.
Lord, by the brightness of Your light
In holy faith Your Church unite;
From ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue
This to Your praise, O Lord, our God, be sung:
Alleluia, alleluia!*

*Come, holy Light, guide divine,
Now cause the Word of life to shine.
Teach us to know our God aright
And call Him Father with delight.
From ev'ry error keep us free;
Let none but Christ our master be
That we in living faith abide,
In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide.
Alleluia, alleluia!*

*Come, holy Fire, comfort true,
Grant us the will Your work to do
And in Your service to abide;
Let trials turn us not aside.
Lord, by Your pow'r prepare each heart,
And to our weakness strength impart
That bravely here we may contend,
Through life and death to You, our Lord, ascend.
Alleluia, alleluia!*

—“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” *LSB* 497

On Pentecost Christians rejoice in the gift of the Spirit to God’s people from all times and all places. We celebrate and, as on Christmas and Easter, our Pentecost praises resound with joyful Alleluias to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Dr. Gerhard Bode is assistant professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.



'When at Last I Near the Shore'

My Last Visit with Mom



*Mom had long ago
lost touch with reality . . .
but a beloved hymn
cut through the fog.*

The first time I noticed that something was wrong with Mom was when she walked from the plane into the terminal in St. Louis. I had been in meetings there, and she had flown up from Texas to join me for my flight back to Maryland and a visit with my family. Her brow furrowed as she looked around. "What do we have to do?" she asked. "How do we get my suitcase? Where do we go to get the plane to Baltimore?"

This was the woman who loved to travel and often did so alone. But here she was, looking small and unsure, as if she were flying for the first time. And for the first time, our roles reversed. No longer was she the parent who guided me. Suddenly, it seemed, she needed my help to pilot her through a world that would become increasingly foreign.

More unpleasant milestones like this one marked the progression of what in time was labeled as Alzheimer's disease. The first time she didn't send out the Christmas cards that she had so loved exchanging. The first time she burned up a pot when she forgot that she had turned on the stove. The first time she



forgot my name. The first time she was totally unable to offer an appropriate emotional response—which was at my husband’s funeral. With each first, I felt a jolt not unlike a small electric shock.

Each phase of the disease carried its own sorrows. For me, one of the hardest parts was watching her increasing awareness and frustration about her departing memory. She sadly gave up her beloved volunteer job counting the children’s offerings at Grace Lutheran School. “I just can’t remember things anymore,” she complained, lower lip trembling. “I’m losing it!” These were tough times for her, and it was almost easier when her cognitive faculties were so chewed up that she no longer knew that she was “losing it.”

Mom’s increasing aggression was also hard, especially when directed at other loved ones. In and out of periods of lucidity, she lashed out at those who were trying to help her—especially the sister who did most to monitor her health, her physical and spiritual well-being, and her checkbook. “You treat me like a baby,” she shouted. My sister tried hard not to take it personally, but she confessed that every insult and rejection stung.

Throughout my life, I had known that I held a special place in Mom’s heart. I was the youngest of her six children, and no matter how much I grew and matured, she always referred to me as “my baby.” I also had been born the day that she turned 38, and throughout my life she treasured the fact that we shared our birthdays.

It was on one of those birthdays that I recognized how far the disease had progressed—and felt its impact most starkly. I had called to wish her “Happy Birthday.” She muttered a “thank you” and went on to chat about a birthday gift in front of her, though she couldn’t remember who had given it to her. Not once during the ensuing conversation did it occur to her that it was my birthday, too. It felt strange to lose this important connection.

When I next visited at her home, she often called me Helen—the name of her youngest sister. My sisters who lived nearby said that she now frequently forgot to turn off stove burners and that the Grace Lutheran School

principal had rescued her when she got lost on her daily walk in the neighborhood. They suggested that her condition had reached the point of making it unsafe for her to live alone.

To confirm this for myself, I drove her to church on Sunday morning. I pretended that I had forgotten the way and asked her to give me directions as we traveled. The way was not complicated, and she had driven it many times, but on this day she became disoriented almost immediately. I knew that my siblings were right, so before I returned home, I helped research assisted-living facilities that specialized in serving patients with dementia. One of these facilities was on a farm, and since she had spent most of her life on farms, we thought she would be most comfortable there.

Months later I called to tell her that I was coming to visit her out at the farm. Again and again, she asked, “Who is this?” Each time, I replied, “This is Edie, your daughter.” Finally, she said, “Well, I don’t know who you are, but if you say you’re my daughter, I suppose we should meet.”

She showed me around the place a bit, explaining that she didn’t know how *she* got stuck with the family farm. She didn’t really like having that much responsibility; it was a burden, she said, but she was trying to make the best of it. “My father built that barn,” she informed me. Then she pointed to a young pecan tree about 15 feet tall and told me that her father had planted that tree. Not once did I correct her. She felt that she belonged there, and I was not about to suggest otherwise.

In time, Mom’s increasing aggression and need for more professional care required her transfer to a nursing home in town. By this time, she had little awareness of her surroundings and spent most of her days in a wheelchair. More than once, she had neared death, but somehow, for some reason, continued to cling to life. After one of these episodes, a sister called to say that I should probably come soon.

I did—just in time, it seemed. During each of the first two days, she was awake for a while and listened and

My Last Visit with Mom

watched. I thought she even smiled, but I wasn't sure.

On the third day, she would not respond to attempts to rouse her, and the nurses said that she had not been awake since other family members and I had left the day before. They weren't sure when—or if—she would wake up again. There were early signs of kidney failure.

In two days, I would have to return home, but I hadn't really said what I needed to say. I had heard that God's Word can get through when nothing else does, especially in familiar Scripture and hymns and prayers, so I decided to try it. I poured through the hymnal, marking the pages of Mom's favorite hymns.

My sisters had to work the following day, but my brother-in-law accompanied me to the nursing home. With nursing-staff consent, we wheeled my still-sleeping, unresponsive mother into the little chapel. Richard sat on one side of Mom. I sat on the other. We began to sing: "My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine . . ."

Verse 2: Nothing changed. Mom slept.

"Mom, I can still picture you, years ago, pedaling your little pump organ as you played hymns. You even taught me your favorite one. Remember?" Richard joined me: "Jesus, Savior, pilot me / Over life's tempestuous sea."

Mom's head rose slightly.

"Unknown waves before me roll, / Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal."

Mom's eyelids fluttered open. "Chart and compass come from Thee: Jesus, Savior, pilot me."

As we launched into the second verse, Mom looked at us and listened. I thought I saw a glimmer of recognition—not of us, necessarily, but of something. At the refrain, her mouth began to work, as if to sing with us.

And so she continued as we sang the final verse:

"When at last I near the shore
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest
Then, when leaning on Thy breast
May I hear Thee say to me,
'Fear not, I will pilot thee.'"

She was awake and responding. We had her attention! This was my chance.

"Mom, I know you're really tired. You don't have to stay here just for us. If you're waiting for our permission to go, you have it. You can go home to be with Jesus any time you're ready. You don't have to be afraid; He'll show you the way."

"Do you want to pray with us?" Richard asked. He began: "Our Father, who art in heaven . . ." Mom lowered her head and closed her eyes. Her lips moved ever so slightly.

After a moment of silence, I started Mom's other most-favorite hymn, "What a Friend we have in Jesus . . ." Her head stayed down but she opened her eyes and tried to sing with us for a moment. Then she closed her eyes and soon fell asleep.

It was enough. Though Mom lingered for about three weeks, she did not regain consciousness. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be with her during her last lucid moments, when God's Word and Spirit broke through her mental fog to give peace to her and to us. To her plea, "Jesus, Savior, pilot me / Over life's tempestuous sea," Jesus had answered, "Fear not, I will pilot thee."

**Edith M. "Edie" Sodowsky is a member
of Peace in Christ Lutheran Church, Walkersville, Md.**



Edie Sodowsky's mother,
Esther Wilke, on her 85th birthday.

A close-up photograph of a hand pouring water from a clear glass pitcher into a brass bowl. The water is captured in mid-pour, creating a dynamic splash. The background is slightly blurred, showing a blue fabric and a wooden surface.

ONE MESSAGE MANY MESSENGERS

by Glen Thomas

In a world saturated with messages, only one message rises above all others to bring eternal hope, joy, and peace. Christ proclaimed this message Himself: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25–26 *ESV*).

Our seminaries in Fort Wayne and St. Louis continue to prepare many messengers to proclaim this message faithfully and vigorously worldwide.

A few of these messengers are featured in the following pages. They come from very different backgrounds, and they serve in very different environments.

The following pages also highlight the importance of identifying, informing, and encouraging appropriate candidates for pastoral ministry. Every person in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod can participate in this vital activity.

This issue of *The Lutheran Witness* also coincides with Pastoral Education Month, a collaborative effort between the LCMS Board for Pastoral Education and our two seminaries. While not designed exclusively for use in May, Pastoral Education Month materials may be accessed online at www.lcms.org/pastoraleducation.

These are exciting and challenging times for our seminaries. Blessed with dedicated students, visionary leadership, renowned faculty members, and devoted staffs, our seminaries continue to form faithful, mission-minded messengers. May our prayers, encouragement, and support attend them!

Rev. Glen Thomas is the executive director of the LCMS Board for Pastoral Education.



Into All the World

Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

—2 Tim. 4:2 ESV

The known world has grown since the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the young pastor Timothy some 2,000 years ago. His words, however, continue to be appropriate for pastors today.

The Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ does not change, and the varieties of ministry today are quite similar to the time of St. Paul. America, like ancient Asia Minor, is a crossroad of cultures, lifestyles, and beliefs. Immigrants and foreign-born workers bring their languages and culture to urban and rural locations alike. An array of belief systems—both religious and secular—compete in the public forum. So Paul’s words ring true for more than 5,000 pastors who actively serve in LCMS parishes and other ministries here at home and around the globe. They are the messengers who preach and teach the Word, that life-giving message of God’s enduring love for His people. These messengers are also ministers with the Word—correcting, encouraging, and comforting the people of their congregations.

As the Synod marks May as Pastoral Education Month, here are examples of “One Message—Many Messengers.”



Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor: ‘A Profound Honor’

“We have members representing 25 different cultural groups,” says Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor, describing Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in The Bronx, N.Y. Even as it celebrates its 80th anniversary, the congregation, he says, is “A growing, vibrant, liturgical, exciting community of faith.”

The pastor as shepherd is a dominant image for Taylor, who has served Redeemer for seven of his eight years in ministry. “Following the Good Shepherd is a joy, knowing that I am one of His sheep who has the privilege of being one of His undershepherds,” he says. “I get to see people through many stages and times in their lives and am able to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to them.”

Taylor also speaks of the need for a Lutheran confessional revival, explaining, “That involves knowing who you are. Lutherans have beautiful theology and so much to share with the world.” The task, he continues, is to proclaim what Jesus Christ has done, continues to do, and will do when He returns in glory. While it is a familiar message to many, it is a foreign message to the world, he adds. “It’s our opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ.”

Rev. Richard Schlak: ‘Front Line of Spiritual Struggle’

Seeing people respond to the Word is one joy in being a messenger, says Rev. Richard Schlak, who served 17 years as a missionary in Venezuela. “In the ministry, we are in a spiritual struggle. When you proclaim God’s Word, you don’t always see results immediately. But every once in a while God pulls back the curtain, and you can see what He’s been doing behind the scenes.

“In Venezuela, I made mistakes; still the Lord accomplished His plan,” Schlak remarks. “When we trust Him and follow what He has laid out for us, even if we make mistakes, He brings it to the place He wants it to be.”

Some challenges are age-old, like the battle between natural man resisting the Gospel and the Spirit-led rebirth, Schlak says. And today brings complications such as postmodernism (“your truth may not be the same as my truth”), which affects U.S. and Venezuelan culture alike.



Schlak also cites challenges in his current role as a trainer of Spanish-speaking church workers to plant new ministries. “For many Hispanics, it feels like betrayal of family, one’s people, to change over to become a Protestant,” he remarks. “And in the U.S., first-generation immigrants may not have geographic roots or income, so they move around, and it’s hard to build up a church on that basis.”

Schlak is now director of the Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute in El Paso, Texas. Supported by both the Rocky Mountain District and LCMS World Mission, the institute seeks to ground Hispanics in basic Lutheran theology with emphasis on evangelism and missions. The institute works closely with the Center for Hispanic Studies in St. Louis.



Hiruy Gebremichael: ‘The Call Is Following Me’

As a new teacher in a Lutheran school in his native Eritrea, Hiruy Gebremichael, a third-generation Lutheran, was encouraged to become a pastor. “I kind of hid myself at the time, but I could not escape from the call,” he relates, smiling.

For years, Gebremichael stayed on the periphery. He taught school, worked with youth ministry, learned sign language, and taught in deaf schools. Eventually, he became secretary for youth work for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea, a position he held for seven years.

In 2003, he entered pastoral training and started as an evangelist—only to be interrupted. His wife, Nardos, an accountant, received a job offer in Atlanta, Ga. So, Hiruy joined her in the United States.

And the call followed him.

In Atlanta, he met other Eritreans of Lutheran background. “But they were not attending church,” he says. “We started to discuss ‘why not start a church here?’ After a year, I met Rev. Ray Borchelt, pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church, and the church welcomed us. So, right now we are sharing the same facility.”

On his way to becoming a pastor, Gebremichael is serving Eritrean Wengelawit Lutheran Church, now numbering about 30 members. (*Wengelawit* means “evangelical” in the Tigrigna language of Eritrea). He is a vicar, having completed the basic theology sequence in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology.

“Right now, I’m serving only the Eritreans with our Tigrigna language,” he says. “We have to plant, not only for Eritreans, but for other immigrants, including other immigrants who speak English.”

And the call?

He laughs: “Yes, I couldn’t escape it.”



Rev. James Holowach: ‘Never Time to Look Back’

“It was an eye-opening and enlightening experience—learning about the amazing things taking place in worship, recognizing God’s gifts, who He is, and how He is with us.”

Rev. James Holowach, 48, describes a worship conference that began his transition from medical doctor to pastor. As a musician and

elder responsible for his congregation’s music and worship, he was drawn into the theology of worship.

As he continued to study, he became interested in teaching and catechizing. To do more, Holowach realized, he would have to change careers. So he left a 15-year medical career to study at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

“Pastoral ministry is very fulfilling,” he says. “It is full of unique challenges and unique rewards.”

“First and foremost, every worship experience and opportunity is a joy for me,” says Holowach, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Jackson, Miss., since graduating from the seminary in 2004. “I also enjoy teaching confirmation, working with the junior and senior high school students and seeing the lights go on as they begin understanding God’s Word and its relevance to them.”

The congregation, numbering 39 people in 2004, has grown to 102 and begun outreach to the deaf in the community. Holowach has baptized eight infants and one adult. “It’s getting noisy in church,” he remarks, adding that the older, original members are almost giddy at hearing children in worship again.

“I haven’t had time to miss medicine,” Holowach says. “I’ve never had time to look back.”

Preparing the Messengers

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

—1 Peter 5:2 *ESV*

Diverse” is an apt description of the ministries and locations to which today’s pastors and missionaries bring the message of God’s forgiveness and life in Jesus Christ.

So, how does a seminary prepare future pastors for these diverse contexts?

“We can only do the most important things while we have the students on campus or under our tutelage,” says Dr. Dale Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Those “important things,” he says, are to give students a foundation of theological knowledge and a desire to sensitively adapt to their situations. In Meyer’s words, it is imparting a “curious love for people and a curious love of God.”

A similar answer comes from Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, where faculty have shaped a curriculum designed to form able ministers of the Gospel in today’s context.

Historically, the Synod’s seminaries were “heavily Germanic,” observes Wenthe. “And we basically downloaded information—you know, Greek, Hebrew, dogmatics. When the church was of one cultural background, that was very effective.”

But the culture has changed dramatically, Wenthe continues.

“That’s why we have to do more than just fill up the head,” he says. “So we’re trying to build a kind of mental and spiritual agility into our students to know who they are and the context where the Lord has placed them—then to present the confession in ways that can be heard and considered and, under God’s grace, blessed.”

Meyer says, “I tell my students, this is about you and your salvation. If you are on this curious quest to know more about God and your salvation—and to know more about people—then you are going to be a more relevant pastor.

“It’s a dandy time to be out there in the ministry; it’s a joyous time,” he adds. “People today are battered from pillar to post by emotions. They want something that is stable, like Hebrews says, ‘an anchor for the soul.’ And we’ve got it.”

Wenthe agrees. He cites two challenges for men who are deciding whether to invest their lives in the pastoral ministry.

“One is the larger cultural contest between light and darkness,” he says. “The dark fruits of Satan are becoming more visible in the violence and the loss of human significance. To be a messenger that every man and woman and child counts in the drama of creation is, to me, the foundational reason to consider the ministry.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, seek to provide future pastors with a strong foundation for their future work in God’s kingdom. At left, Dr. Dale Meyer (top) and Dr. Dean O. Wenthe (bottom) speak with students and their families during seminary functions. Facing page: At Concordia Theological Seminary, students and faculty enter Kramer Chapel for worship at the beginning of the 2007–2008 academic year.





“The second reason is the church’s need,” Wenthe continues. “Unless the actuarial tables are really in error, that need is growing.”

Wenthe hopes renewal of *esprit de corps* and camaraderie among pastors and church workers also will attract more men to pastoral ministry. He and Meyer want to see the seminaries be “renewal agents” by demonstrating enthusiasm and affection for the mission of the church.

“I’d love to see the seminaries be one of the greatest unifying forces of the church to support the LCMS President and the Council of Presidents,” Wenthe says.

Unifying and teaching the church will be on the agenda when the seminary boards of regents participate in a retreat in June with LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick.

Meyer and Wenthe say the seminaries are eager to offer their faculties’ expertise as resources to congregations—for pastors and laity. In addition, advances in technology will make distance learning and continuing education more economical to deliver.

Financial support continues to be an issue for the educational process that forms future pastors and deaconesses at the seminaries. Interviewed separately, Meyer and Wenthe both spoke to a common misconception that the

seminaries are well funded from the national budget of the Synod.

Wenthe says people tend to think the seminaries are in “high cotton.” However, he notes that the Synod provides only 1.5 percent of the Fort Wayne operating budget through its traditional subsidy model. Direct gifts supply more than half of the annual budgets at both seminaries.

“We cannot depend on subsidy from the budget of the Synod to fund the aspirations and dreams of the people for mission and ministry in the future,” says Meyer. Still, he expresses optimism because the people of the church instinctively know seminaries are important.

While students receive financial aid to help with tuition, they have additional expenses for housing, groceries, and clothing. More than half the students are married and many have children. Often they also carry debt from undergraduate education.

Contributions to support seminary education are appreciated, and Meyer adds that congregations also need to provide adequate salaries for their pastors: “Our students wouldn’t mind incurring some debt in their desire to become pastors if they know they can pay it off at the end.” —R.L.

Raising Up the Messengers: Answering ‘How Do I Know?’

‘The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’

—Matt. 9:37–38 *ESV*



By the time a man contacts the seminary, it's likely he has given pastoral ministry a lot of thought. Often the prospective student wants to know if he should pursue seminary study.

Rev. Kyle Castens (right) speaks with students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Castens is director of admissions for the seminary.

As the Lord calls workers for the harvest, the whole church has a role in identifying, encouraging, and assisting men as they consider and pursue the pastoral ministry.

“We look at it as if we’re one big team—pastors, laity and seminaries—in this particular area of the Lord’s ministry,” says Rev. Kyle Castens, director of admissions at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. “We see ourselves as those who go out into the trenches, but also as those who help and equip the pastors and the laity.”

Rev. Scott Stiegemeier, director of admissions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, adds, “To some extent, it’s vocational counseling as we help men think through the process. We help people overcome obstacles.”

By the time a man contacts the seminary, it’s likely he has given pastoral ministry a lot of thought. Often the prospective student wants to know if he should pursue seminary study.

On the question of call, Castens turns conversation to the “earnest desire” that St. Paul writes about in his first letter to Timothy. “The call is something solid,” Castens adds, “That’s what will come in April during their fourth year in seminary.”

Stiegemeier suggests that the pastor of their home church may be the best place to begin the “how do I know” kinds of questions. Sometimes the advice of an outside objective person is helpful. If a man is married, he also should be discussing the topic with his wife.

The traditional route to becoming a pastor is to first obtain a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Majors in liberal arts—history, philosophy, theology, English, communications—are good preparation.

The seminary involves another four years of study leading to a master of divinity degree. Seminarians learn Greek and Hebrew in order to study the Scriptures in the original languages. Their study includes three years on campus, including “field work” in a local parish. Vicarage, typically during the third year of study, is a one-year learning experience in a congregation.

The life transitions are huge, say the admissions officers. Uprooting family can be traumatic—something that isn't done lightly.

“Since we do require a bachelor's degree, it is not uncommon for students to enter the seminary with significant educational debt,” Stiegemeier remarks. “If we can talk to them early, we advise how they can fund their undergraduate education. We encourage people to take out as few loans as possible.”

The seminaries develop financial-aid packages based on their resources, but the admissions officers also encourage men to explore sources like local grants or scholarships for graduate study or financial support from home and neighboring congregations.

Castens recommends having a “whole house” in order, whether it may be outstanding debt or a wife's uncertainty about the move, or other issues. He says the seminary may, “out of love,” decline an applicant. “We may tell an applicant to wait until things are more stable because we want him to enter the ministry on the strongest possible footing.”

Stiegemeier encourages the church-at-large to follow Christ's instruction to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers. “I would call upon congregations to continue to pray for future workers and to give sacrificially to our seminaries,” he says. “Our Synod is blessed to have two outstanding institutions to prepare men for the pastoral ministry.”

Roland Lovstad is a free-lance writer and a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Perryville, Mo.



For More Information

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne:

www.ctsfw.edu

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis: www.csl.edu

“What A Way” (recruiting and retaining church workers): www.WhatAWay.org

LCMS Board for Pastoral Education:

www.LCMS.org/PastoralEducation

10 Ideas to Encourage Future Pastors

Here are ways you and your congregation can encourage men to consider pastoral ministry. (The ideas also apply to encouraging men and women to consider other full-time church-work vocations.)

- 1** Pray that the Lord will raise up workers for His harvest field (Luke 10:2). Pray for those who consider pastoral ministry, for those who study at our seminaries, and for those who serve as pastors.
- 2** Your congregational life is a model. Does your congregation show affection for your pastor? Does he exhibit affection for the congregation? Do you pay your workers adequately, encourage vacations, and support their continuing education?
- 3** By their example and encouragement, professional church workers can plant the seed of serving as a pastor in a young man's heart and encourage its growth as the years pass by allowing him to serve in meaningful ways.
- 4** Both seminaries offer on-campus opportunities for men—whether high school, college age, or older—to experience seminary life. Consider underwriting the travel costs for a man from your congregation.
- 5** Conduct annual Sunday emphases highlighting church-work vocations. Include information about the Synod's colleges and seminaries. Provide a place where members can obtain materials about church vocations and the Synod's educational institutions.
- 6** As a parent, help your son explore opportunities for pastoral ministry. Encourage without pushing. Provide an example with personal and family devotions and Bible reading, and pray that the Holy Spirit guide your son.
- 7** Regularly promote and support a scholarship fund for students who attend college with intent to pursue church-work vocations. Bequests and special gifts can be used to establish an endowment for scholarships.
- 8** Offer verbal encouragement to those who have the gifts for pastoral ministry and exhibit a life consistent with Scripture's description of the pastor. Encourage them to talk with their pastor and to contact the seminaries.
- 9** As individuals, church groups, or a congregation, consider how you can regularly donate to one or both of the seminaries or to the Synod's Joint Seminary Fund.
- 10** Encourage young people to participate in youth group, district, and national youth gatherings, and other opportunities to experience the wider church.

—R.L.

For more stories about pastoral education, visit lcms.org/witness and click on ‘One Message—Many Messengers.’

*“...to prepare God's people for works of service,
so that the body of Christ may be built up ...
to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-13*

The trust you show in the work of our seminaries, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana is greatly valued. Together, our congregations and seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have a special bond, united in their commitment to Christ and Him crucified. Out of gratitude to our Lord for the love and mercy He has shown, please prayerfully consider making a gift today.

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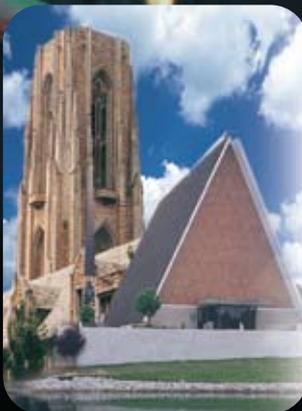
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After a four-decade career that spanned the globe, one of the most influential people in modern motorsports has found a spiritual home in a Lutheran congregation.



Memorial Day weekend in Indianapolis is synonymous with the “500.” The sweet smell of high-octane fuel, the pungent aroma of hot oil and overstressed tires, the spectacular noise, the press of 350,000 enthusiastic fans—these are the sights and sounds of the Indianapolis 500.

For much of Leo Mehl’s career, the sights and sounds of “Indy” were a part of his workaday world, first as a tire engineer for Goodyear, and then, beginning in 1967, as manager of Goodyear’s international racing department, and later (1974–96) as director of the company’s racing division. After retiring from Goodyear, Mehl served as executive director of the Indy Racing League (IRL) and as a vice-president of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway from 1996 to 2000. Today, he remains a consultant for the IRL.

While few outside the automotive industry may be familiar with his name or accomplishments—Goodyear was the undisputed king of the racing-tire hill during his tenure as director of the company’s racing division—

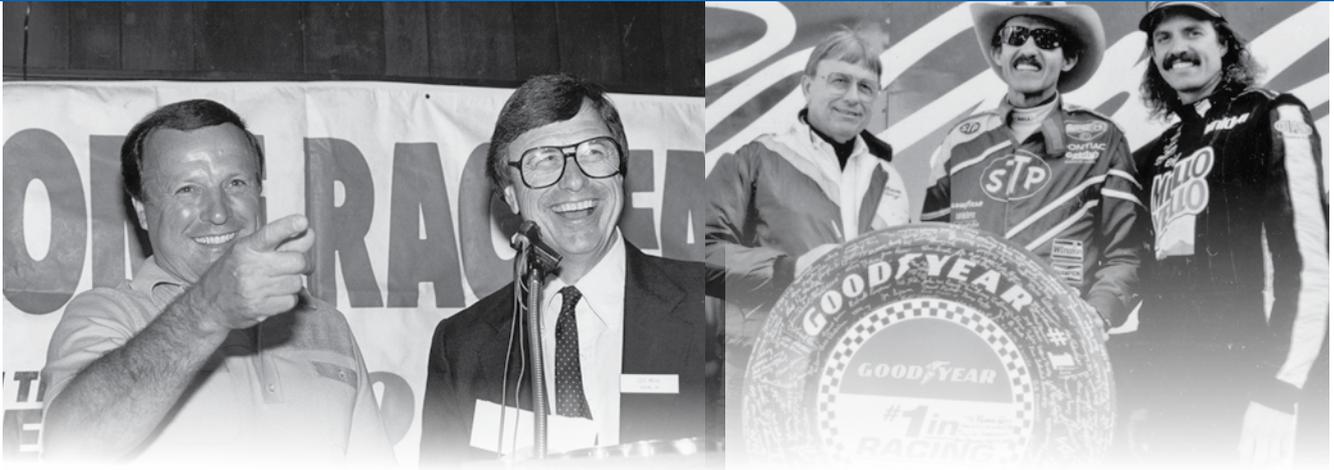
Mehl, a member of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Hudson, Ohio, is acknowledged as an industry leader by his colleagues. Last August, in recognition of his decades-long contributions to the sport, he was inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame in Novi, Mich.

I first met Mehl—known by many as a “force of nature”—and his wife, Marjorie, while I was serving as Gloria Dei’s pastor. After a nomadic existence that had taken them to the far corners of the world as part of the global racing family, they were in search of a regular church home, one that would nurture them with Word and Sacrament and sustain them in their faith-life. During a follow-up home visit, we spoke of faith and their spiritual needs. We read Scripture and prayed. Not a word was said about the scope of Mehl’s achievements in his chosen vocation. Subsequently, Mehl joined our men’s ministry, the “New-Man Group,” and he and Marjorie prepared themselves for membership in Gloria Dei.

Through my growing friendship with the Mehls,

Finishing the Race





As Goodyear's point man in motorsports, Leo Mehl's career spanned the globe. Left, Mehl enjoys a laugh with A.J. Foyt. Right, Mehl presents NASCAR driver Richard Petty (center) with an autographed tire at Petty's 1992 retirement from racing. With Mehl and Petty is Petty's son, Kyle.

through their participation in church activities, and through a visit with them to the 2006 Indianapolis 500, I learned that motorsports professionals are "on the road" for much of their careers, and that racing families and others in the sport often turn to chaplaincy services such as the Indy Racing League's IRL Ministry for spiritual nourishment and, from time to time, counseling and crisis intervention. They gather in garages or infield tents, or maybe in the catacomb-like mazes that inhabit the undersides of grandstands, for prayer, Bible study, devotions, and worship. For Mehl, these ministries often served as his "home away from home." Like any family, motorsports families need a "faith pit crew" because of the challenges of the racing life, he observes.

For me, Mehl's career is a reminder that ministry is found where people live, even if sometimes that might be under the hood of a racecar in a track garage. I also find in it a reminder that God is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and that the nomad has a permanent place in the family of faith.

When he speaks about his achievements, Mehl is quick to credit his colleagues and co-workers, his "pit crews." I find a spiritual reminder there, too. When we are in need of encouragement, we also have a much-needed "pit crew." God greets each of us, whatever the station of our lives, with celebration and joy. God's only-begotten Son finished His race. He willingly gave His life in exchange for ours. When Jesus spoke the words on the cross, "It is finished," He was speaking about all that needed to be done concerning the salvation of humankind. Finishing our race is now secure because of "The One" who first crossed the line. On Easter morning, as the stone was rolled from the tomb, I can imagine God the Father waving a checkered flag in celebration of this eternal triumph.

That is a victory in which the Mehls rejoice, and in which we can all rejoice.

**Rev. Timothy C. Cartwright is pastor
of Grace Lutheran Church, Ashland, Org.**



New Men in Christ: A 'Pit Crew' for Men's Ministry

I am a great advocate of outreach and evangelism. As with my current congregation, Grace Lutheran in Ashland, Org., and with all the congregations I have served, at Gloria Dei we intentionally formed a "pit crew" for our men's ministry effort.

Called the "New-Man Group," participants gathered once a month at 7 a.m. on Saturday for coffee, friendship, Bible study, and breakfast. It was one of the activities to which I invited Leo Mehl. The group was a place to ask questions, establish connections, and engage in honest conversation.

—T.C.C.

to read more, go to www.lcms.org/witness

Note: The "official notices" are published for a single purpose only: giving notice of a result, namely, changes in the Synod's membership rosters by the addition or deletion of the names of individuals and congregations. It is not always appropriate that reasons for the changes be identified in the published notices. Since a change can occur for any of a variety of reasons, no assumptions may be made merely from the fact that a change has occurred.—Ed.

Official Notices From the Districts

JOHN DRESSER was removed from the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Commissioned Minister, effective Feb. 15 by action of the district president for non-response to roster status. GINGER K. VOSE was removed from the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Commissioned Minister-Teacher, effective Feb. 15 by action of the district president because she cannot be located. REV. BRUCE SOMMERFIELD, Sebring, Fla., was appointed circuit counselor for the Heartland Circuit, replacing REV. PAUL RUFF, Sebring, Fla., who was called to glory Feb. 26.—Dr. Gerhard C. Michael Jr., president, LCMS Florida-Georgia District.

REV. ROGER NUERGE, Freedom, Pa., was appointed circuit counselor for the Pittsburgh Northwest Circuit of the Eastern District, replacing REV. PAUL MESEKE, who accepted a call in Brooksville, Fla.—Dr. John G. Brunner, president, LCMS Eastern District.

RONALD O. HEINS, Warren Woods, Mich., and HOON J. KIM, Clay, Mich., were removed from the Commissioned Minister of Religion roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as of March

4 due to a lack of response to the annual reporting form. BRADLEY H. KELLY, Marshall, Mich., resigned from the Ordained Minister of Religion roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as of March 11. He is, therefore, no longer eligible for call consideration.—Rev. C. William Hoesman, president, LCMS Michigan District.

Official Notices Colloquies

BRADLEY FEENSTRA, Spring Lake, Mich.; HOLLY GULLIVER, Saginaw, Mich.; ANN FICHTNER, Fort Wayne, Ind.; CAROLINE PINTNER, North Royalton, Ohio; WENDY SIEVERS, Tempe, Ariz.; BRIDGET SNYDER, Shelby Township, Mich.; JAIME STRICKERT, Saginaw, Mich.; PAMELA TAYLOR, Brookfield, Wis.; have submitted applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through CUEnet at Concordia University Education Network, Bend, Ore.

ADAM LEE, Tustin, Calif., and MICHAEL YOUNG, Irvine, Calif.; have submitted applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.

Correspondence regarding their applications should be directed within four weeks after publication of this notice to Dr. William R. Diekelman, Chairman, Colloquy Committee, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

ERIC GLESSNER, Orange, Calif., and MICHELLE HINES, North Las Vegas, Nev., have completed all the required coursework for the Lutheran Teaching Colloquy and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Becky Peters, Director, Colloquy Program, Concordia University, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine, CA 92612-3203.

Official Notices Requests for Reinstatement

SCOTT KRUEGER, Ripon, Wis.; THOMAS E. NELSON, Billings, Mont.; REBECCA NIEBUHR, Georgetown, Texas; RONALD E. OPPEN JR., Rochester, Minn., and MICHELLE STONEMAN, Lincoln, Neb., have applied for reinstatement to the Minister of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Correspondence regarding these applications should be directed to the undersigned for receipt no later than June 5.—Dr. Raymond L. Hartwig, Secretary, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

Positions

The Lutheran Witness welcomes notices for positions available at affiliated entities and Recognized Service Organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., June 20 for the August issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.

The following institutions of the **Concordia University System (CUS)** are seeking candidates for the following positions:

- **Concordia University, Portland, Ore.**, seeks to fill the following faculty position: **history**.
- **Concordia University Wisconsin**, seeks to fill the following faculty positions: **director of Graduate Reading; director of Graduate Teacher Certificate**.

For more information about these and other CUS positions, including complete job descriptions, qualifications, and application process, visit <http://www.lcms.org/cusjobs> and click on "Positions Available at Our Campuses."

Director, Music & Worship Resources

Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, is seeking a full-time Director, Music & Worship Resources. This position oversees the development and production of all music and worship publications, linear, visual, audio, and multimedia; finds and recruits potential editors, composers, and clinicians; serves as chief liaison concerning worship and music with LCMS units and other publishing houses; and prepares and oversees the annual business plan.

Candidates must be a member of the LCMS, listed on the official roster of Synod (preferred), possess a master's degree or equivalent training in theology and/or church music and have five years parish experience or its equivalent with demonstrated interest in total parish ministry.

To apply, please forward a cover letter and resume to CPH, 3558 S. Jefferson, St. Louis, MO, 63118; or email cphresume@cph.org.

Anniversaries

The Lutheran Witness *welcomes notices of less than 50 words from LCMS congregations about their upcoming "milestone" anniversaries.* The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., June 20 for the August issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org. —Ed.

Redeemer, Elmhurst, Ill., will begin its year-long celebration of its 80th anniversary with a festival service at 10 a.m., May 4. The guest preacher will be Dr. Roger Pittelko, president/bishop emeritus of the English District. Contact the church office at (630) 834-1411 or e-mail office345@redeemerlcms.com.

Immanuel, New Wells, Mo., will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the dedication of its building at 9 a.m., May 18. Rev. Ray Mirly, LCMS Missouri District president, will be guest speaker. A potluck meal will be served at noon. Contact Rev. Walter Patzwitz, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 304 County Road 516, New Wells, MO 63732; (573) 833-6933.

Grace, Menomonee Falls, Wis., will continue to celebrate its 75th anniversary with different monthly themes through June, at which time a two-day picnic on the new church site will be held. Contact the church office at (262) 251-0670.

St. Martin, Basehor, Kan., will celebrate its 100th anniversary with an 11:30 a.m. celebratory meal and a 2 p.m. special worship service on June 1 with Rev. George Mundinger leading worship. A reception will follow. Contact the church office at (913) 724-2900.

St. Paul (Clifty), Columbus, Ind., will celebrate its 160th anniversary at 8 and 11 a.m., June 8. Dr. Robert Rahn of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation will be the preacher. A brunch and program will be held between services. Contact the church office at (812) 376-6504 or e-mail stpaulutheran@bcrcemc.net.

St. Paul's, Chicago Heights, Ill., will complete its year-long 125th anniversary celebration at the 8 and 10:45 a.m. worship services on June 8. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary and a son of the congregation, will be guest preacher. The celebration will continue at 1:30 p.m. with a banquet at the St. Michael Serbian Hall, Lansing, Ill.

The ticket deadline is May 15. Contact the church office at (708) 849-6929.

Redeemer, Burlington, N.C., will conclude its 50th anniversary year with a dinner and program at 5 p.m., June 14, and a festival service at 11 a.m., June 15. To register for the dinner, contact the church office at (336) 227-7092 or e-mail yourredeemer@earthlink.net.

Messiah, Greenhills, Ohio, will celebrate its 50th anniversary at 10 a.m., June 8; 5 p.m., June 14; and 10 a.m., June 15. Special events will follow each service. Contact the church office at (513) 825-4768.

Zion, Granton, Wis., will celebrate its 125th anniversary beginning at 2 p.m., June 21, with various events, and at 10:30 a.m., June 22, with a worship celebration. Dr. Mark Hannemann will be guest speaker. A noon potluck is planned with songs of praise at 2 p.m.

St. John's, Austin, Minn., will celebrate its 100th anniversary with ordained sons of the congregation, Rev. John Schleicher, Dr. Robert Holst, Rev. Jason Aurringer, and Rev. Tim Runtsch, leading the worship services at 6 p.m., June 28, and at 9 a.m., June 29. A noon meal will be served on Sunday. Contact the church office at (507) 433-2642.

Redeemer, Rochester, Minn., will celebrate its 75th anniversary with a special homecoming weekend on June 28–29. Former Pastor Roger Polansky will be guest speaker. Choir alumni are invited to participate in the festival choir. Contact the church office at (507) 289-5147 or by e-mail at redeemer@charterinternet.com.

St. Bartholomew, Brillion, Wis., will celebrate its 150th anniversary at the 9 a.m. service June 29. Pastors Harley Kopsitske, William Meilner, and Eberhard Klatt will participate in the service. A meal will be served at 11:30 a.m. at Cobblestone Creek Restaurant. Tickets are required. Contact the church office at (920) 756-3031; stbart@pitnet.net.

Immanuel, Terre Haute, Ind., will celebrate its 150th anniversary in the 3 p.m. Divine Service on July 6. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., will be guest preacher. Contact the church office at (812) 232-4972 or e-mail leslie.immanuel@verizon.net.

Gloria Dei, Virginia, Minn., will celebrate its 50th anniversary on July 13 at 7:30 a.m. at Greenwood Town Hall, and at 11 a.m. at the church, followed by a meal to be served from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. At 2:30 p.m., a special anniversary service will be held, followed by a time for sharing.

Immanuel Chapel, North St. Louis County, Mo., will celebrate its 50th anniversary throughout 2008. All former members and pastors who served at this congregation are asked to contact the church office at (314) 741-4700 or e-mail churchoffice@immanuelchapel.net.

In Memoriam

Obituary information is provided by district offices to the Synod's Office of Rosters and Statistics. Any questions about content should be referred, therefore, to the appropriate district office.—Ed.

ORDAINED

BRANDT, ROBERT A., Dec. 10, 1942, Gaylord, Minn., to March 9, 2008, Marshfield, Wis.; son of Theodore and Arzella (Ackerman) Brandt; graduated Springfield, 1970. Served 1970–2008. Ministries/parishes: Spring Valley, Calif.; missionary to Taiwan; Merrill, Marshfield, Wis. Survivors: Harriet (Huner) Brandt; son: Christopher; daughters: Joy Weier, Hope Merkel, Sarah. Funeral: March 14, 2008, Marshfield, Wis.; interment: March 15, 2008, Gaylord, Minn.

KEMPF, GERHARD F.; Feb. 24, 1926, Priest River, Idaho, to Jan. 28, 2008, Spokane, Wash.; son of Gerhard S. and Lily (Klussendorf) Kempff; graduated St. Louis, 1951. Served 1951–1991. Ministries/parishes: missionary to Central America; Libby, Mont.; San Antonio, Texas; Wapato, Wash.; retired 1991. Survivors: Betty Jean (Sandler) Kempff; sons: Mark, Paul, Daniel, Jonathan, Joel, Philip; daughters: Margarita, Melanie, Miriam, Jeanne. Funeral and interment: Feb. 2, 2008, Spokane, Wash.

LINDNER, ERNEST G.; April 5, 1937, Brooklyn, N.Y., to Feb. 17, 2008, Indianapolis, Ind.; son of Ernest and Elizabeth (Hayen) Lindner; graduated Springfield, 1962. Served 1962–2002. Ministries/parishes: Alcester, S.D.; Lyndhurst, N.J.; Roanoke, Va.; Peekskill, N.Y.; Accident, Md.; Cypress, Texas; retired 2002. Survivors: Carolyn Lindner; son: Karl. Funeral: Feb. 21, 2008, Indianapolis, Ind.; interment: Accident, Md.

RIEHL, KARL W.; April 5, 1922, Gadshell, Ontario, Canada, to March 9, 2008, London, Ontario, Canada; son of Henry and Elizabeth (Graul) Riehl; graduated St. Louis, 1945. Served 1945–1986. Ministries/parishes: St. Ann, Mo.; Toronto, Ontario; Western (Missouri) circuit counselor 1954–1960; retired 1986. Survivors: Dorothy (Pflueger) Riehl. Funeral and interment: March 11, 2008, London, Ontario.

SCHAADT, JOHN C.; Oct. 19, 1923, Saginaw, Mich., to March 1, 2008, Arlington Heights, Ill.; son of Peter and Elizabeth (Luft) Schaad; graduated Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Thiensville, 1948. Served 1964–1990. Ministry/parish: Berwyn, Ill.; retired 1990. Preceded in death by his wife, Gladys (Baer) Schaad. Survivors: son: Philip; daughter: Pamela. Memorial service: May 3, 2008, Berwyn, Ill.; cremation.

WOODS, ROBERT A.; June 7, 1943, St. Louis, Mo., to Feb. 6, 2008, Silvis, Ill.; son of Charles and Dorothy (Dahlke) Woods; graduated Fort Wayne, 1985. Served 1985–2008. Ministry/parish: Geneseo, Ill. Survivors: Marilyn (Morrison) Woods; son: Charles; daughters: Carol, Kristen. Funeral: Feb. 9, 2008, Geneseo, Ill.; interment: Feb. 10, 2008, Durham, Mo.

COMMISSIONED

PROKOPY, PAUL E.; July 14, 1928, Albany, N.Y., to Feb. 6, 2008, Livonia, Mich.; son of Rev. and Mrs. Paul G. Prokopy; graduated River Forest, 1953. Served 1954–1973, 1974–1993; retired 1993. Schools/ministries: Staten Island, N.Y.; Webster, Mass.; Detroit, Mich. Survivors: Mary (Kluender) Prokopy; son: Martin; daughters: Lydia, Ann Gardner. Funeral: Feb. 9, 2008, Redford, Mich.; interment: Feb. 9, 2008, Livonia, Mich.

WOLTER, LAJUNE (NEMITZ); June 30, 1931, Charter Oak, Iowa, to Feb. 18, 2008, Homestead, Iowa; daughter of Adolph and Amerlia (Bockelmann) Nemitz; graduated Seward, 1970. Served 1984–2007. School/ministry: Williamsburg, Iowa; retired 2007. Survivors: Glenn Wolter; daughters: Jeanne Welsh, Patti Heitshusen. Funeral and interment: Feb. 21, 2008, Homestead, Iowa.

Putting Together the Pieces

Two-year-old Katelyn was watching the children's TV show "Blue's Clues." The episode featured a pizza, which Katelyn repeatedly referred to as "Pastor's Pizza."

Pastor's Pizza? What could that be?

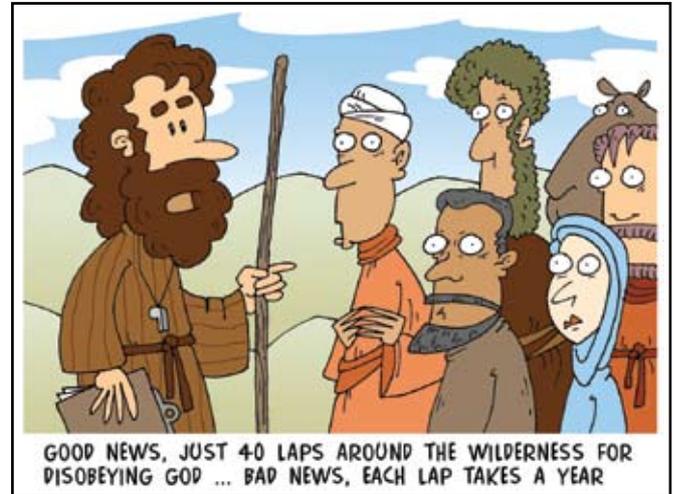
Befuddled, her family finally figured it out—the pizza was cut in the shape of a cross.

Two-year-olds do see Jesus!

—Rev. John Meyer
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Farmington Hills, Mich.

Be Thankful

The school principal, his wife, and their two sons had been invited to Saturday supper at a board member's house. The board member and his wife put on quite a spread. After the meal, and after a final cup of coffee, the principal pushed his chair back from the table and stretched. "My, that was wonderful. It isn't often we eat a meal like that," he enthused.



Cartoon © by Gospel Communications International, Inc. www.reverendfun.com

"Neither do we," quipped the board member's young daughter, who was sitting next to the principal.

—George Kottwitz
Edwardsville, Ill.

The Miracle of Pentecost: A United and Harmonious Church

by Jeffrey Sippy

An old adage says polite gentlemen do not speak poorly of another man's bride. Can you imagine? Can you imagine someone speaking poorly about your spouse?

Yet the Bride of Christ is often maligned and insulted by reckless and thoughtless words—sometimes by its own members. Criticism, complaint, and gossip are the manifestations of those who are divided in sin.

The miracle of Pentecost is unity and harmony. On the day of Pentecost, God gathered His people from fear and hiding and poured out upon them His Holy Spirit. God provided for the Gospel to be heard and understood in each person's native language—if not also in each person's native culture, custom, and tradition. Otherwise broken and divided in sin, the Holy Spirit unites His people in faith and forgiveness. In our Baptism, the Holy Spirit bespeaks us holy and adorns us in Christ's robes of righteousness. Who then, as Paul notes in Rom 8:33, will bring any charge (or word) against God's elect?

Read Gen. 12:1–9. Why did God choose to confuse the language of His people and to scatter them?

Pentecost is the 50th day after the Sabbath of Passover (Lev.

23:15–16). Read Acts 1:4–5 and John 16:5–7. What did Jesus promise His disciples?

Read Acts 1:8. How would the Holy Spirit manifest Himself in the lives of Jesus' disciples, and with what words does Jesus describe the disciples' new role and identity?

In our Baptism we too are filled with the Holy Spirit. Read Acts 2:38. How do you understand your unique calling as an ambassador and witness of Christ? See also 2 Tim. 2:7–8 and Acts 4:32–35.

Read Acts 2:1–4. What filled the house? Who filled each of the disciples?

The disciples were *all together*. This has profound implications for the Church. Read Acts 2:44 and 1 Cor. 12:12–27. How do these words of God describe the Church? What does God command in Eph. 4:3?

Divided at the Tower of Babel, God would unite His people in the Truth of the Gospel proclaimed for all people.

Read Acts 2:5–13. The Church is made up of different people who speak different languages and who have different customs and ways. Miraculously, God provides for each to hear the Gospel in his or her own language. Look at verses 6 and 8. How would you answer the question, *How is it that each one hears in his own native language?*

Sin manifests itself in division and separation. The Spirit of God manifests Himself in unity and harmony. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we are united in Christ and empowered to be His ambassadors and witnesses. We boldly proclaim Christ and Him crucified for the forgiveness of sins, speak well of each other, and explain everything in the kindest of fashions.

Rev. Jeffrey Sippy is senior pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church and Springfield Lutheran School, Springfield and Nixa, Mo.

